The Eyes of the Universe

An essay on consciousness and responsibility in times of collapse

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The Eyes of the Universe

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PROLOGUE

This book is born from a discomfort that doesn't disappear.

A sensation that doesn't come from fear or pessimism, but from something simpler and more honest: the feeling that we're drifting away from what's essential without realizing it. As if we had built a world so full of stimuli, symbols and abstract promises that we've lost sight of what sustains life itself.

For years I asked myself an uncomfortable question:

How is it possible that a conscious species, capable of understanding the universe, acts as if it doesn't care about destroying the only place where it can exist?

I didn't find a single answer. I found many.

Some came from biology: the evolutionary pressures that shaped our brain are not aligned with the scale of the world we've created.

Others came from culture: we've invented narratives that function as sedatives.

Others came from economic systems: structures that reward rapid destruction and punish slow responsibility.

And others, perhaps the deepest, came from philosophy: we don't know what

to do with consciousness or with the ethical weight that existing implies.

Over time, I came to understand something perhaps obvious but profoundly ignored:

we are not prepared for the scale of the consequences we have unleashed.

We are creatures designed to survive the next day, not to manage civilizations that depend on delicate planetary balances.

Our mind remains ancient, but our tools are immense.

However, reducing the problem to biology or economics would be a comfortable simplification.

What we face is something deeper:

a crisis of attention, a crisis of meaning and a crisis of responsibility, all at the same time.

We live saturated by distractions carefully designed to capture our mind.

The systems that should guide us toward collective survival have been captured by interests that benefit from our blindness.

And in the midst of all this, we've lost the capacity to feel the magnitude of what we're obligated to protect: consciousness itself.

Because ultimately, this is what's at stake.

Not the "future of humanity" as an empty cliché, but the continuity of the only conscious experience we know in the universe.

It's possible that other conscious beings exist somewhere.

But until we have proof, it's us: this brief attempt of the cosmos to look at itself.

We are an improbable exception to billions of years of cosmic indifference.

A fragile, temporary and extraordinary anomaly.

And yet, we act as if we were eternal.

This book is not written to convince you of an ideology or to offer you salvation.

It’s not a political manual or a scientific treatise.

Nor is it a moralistic manifesto.

Its purpose is both more humble and more ambitious:

to try to think clearly in a historical moment when thinking has become almost impossible.

To try to look without anesthesia.

To try to name what we normally avoid.

To try to understand why we act the way we do.

To try to recover the dignity of responsibility in a world that rewards evasion.

I don’t claim to offer complete solutions. I don’t have them.

But I can try to build a framework from which to look at what’s happening to us without falling into cynicism or fantasy.

A framework where consciousness, fragility and responsibility are not abstract concepts, but the three threads that hold this book together.

If you continue reading, I propose a simple pact:

don’t look for comfort here.

Don’t look for obligatory optimism or seductive apocalypse.

Look, if you want, for something rarer: honesty without despair.

A way of being alive that doesn’t depend on denying what we know.

A way of being human that doesn’t require closing our eyes to endure ourselves.

A way of thinking that treats us as adults on a planet that no longer admits naivety or excuses.

If this book achieves anything, let it be this:

that for a moment you remember you’re part of the only place where the universe has learned to look at itself.

And that this simple truth is enough to demand more from us than what we’re doing.

Welcome.

Or rather: open your eyes.

CHAPTER 1 — THE EYES OF THE UNIVERSE

For almost all of cosmic history, there was no one watching.

For thousands of millions of years, the universe existed in absolute silence: galaxies forming, stars exploding, entire worlds being born and dying without witnesses. Everything happened, but nothing was lived. The cosmos was full of processes and empty of experience.

And then, at a tiny point lost among millions of galaxies, something extraordinary happened: matter began to feel. First in a rudimentary way, then in more complex forms, until reaching something that no other known physical phenomenon had achieved: the capacity to know it exists.

Consciousness is a statistical anomaly, an astonishing accident.

It’s not a granted privilege or a predetermined destiny.

It’s the improbable consequence of a series of chemical events chained over eons that converged in animals capable of looking, remembering, imagining and anticipating.

We are that accident.

And although it’s hard for us to accept, we have no guarantee that the universe is full of beings like us.

We like to believe it because the alternative overwhelms us: that we are, perhaps, the only conscious crack in the entire extension of the known cosmos.

The only internal gaze of the universe upon itself.

Mysticism is not needed for this idea to matter.

We don’t need spirituality or teleology.

A simple fact suffices:

Without consciousness, there is no possible experience.

Without experience, there is no beauty or pain, no memory or meaning.

There is no lived universe, only an indifferent universe.

The universe can exist without us, but it cannot be felt without some being capable of feeling it.

That is the weight and rarity of our condition.

Human consciousness emerged on a planet that was not designed for us.

It appeared in a world that had already been functioning without spectators for billions of years. And it did so thanks to an extremely delicate balance: the right distance from the sun, the presence of liquid water, a stable atmosphere, a protective magnetic field, a series of unrepeatable geological and evolutionary accidents.

We don’t remember this because we were born with it already given, but we live sustained by a series of coincidences that might never be repeated.

We are not the norm of the cosmos: we are the improbable exception.

And yet, we act as if all these conditions were permanent.

Conscious life not only appeared, but evolved to a form capable of understanding its own appearance.

That understanding should have been the beginning of a profoundly responsible, cautious, humble and curious species.

But our history took a different course.

While we developed the capacity to think, we also inherited another legacy: a brain molded by millions of years of survival in radically different conditions.

A brain designed to avoid immediate dangers, not to plan for centuries.

A brain trained to compete for scarce resources, not to understand the limits of a finite planet.

A brain prepared to defend a few, not to protect everyone’s future.

We are, at the same time, the most complex mind on the planet and an organism profoundly limited by its evolutionary origin.

This tension defines much of what we are.

And it also defines the silent catastrophe we’re entering.

But before talking about collapse, it’s necessary to understand our initial condition precisely.

Because if we don’t understand how extraordinary consciousness is, it will be impossible to understand how tragic losing it would be.

Consciousness is the only known phenomenon that allows the universe to contemplate itself from within.

We don’t know if it’s common or rare.

But we know that here, at this point in the cosmos, it exists.

Knowing this should be enough to treat it with a reverence that borders on the sacred, even if you don’t believe in anything sacred.

It should be enough to stop, observe, think and protect what makes existence worth experiencing.

But we don’t.

Not because we’re evil, but because we’re distracted.

Because the world we’ve built around our consciousness is so noisy, so demanding, so saturated with invented symbols, that it has displaced our natural capacity for contemplation.

We’ve replaced wonder with urgency.

Perspective with anxiety.

Admiration with accumulation.

Consciousness with distraction.

And thus, little by little, we’re extinguishing the only light the universe has lit here.

This chapter exists to remind you of something fundamental before moving forward:

nothing we’ll see in the following pages makes sense if you forget how improbable it is to be alive and conscious at this instant.

You are a cosmic coincidence that sees, feels and understands.

You are one of the few forms—perhaps the only one—in which the universe has become capable of looking.

And if that gaze closes, even though the cosmos continues to exist, it will have lost the only way we know of touching itself from within.

That’s why what we’re doing is so serious.

And that’s why understanding it clearly is the first act of responsibility.

CHAPTER 2 — DISTRACTION

Consciousness is an improbable miracle.

But a miracle is useless if whoever carries it lives as if they didn’t have it.

At some point in our history, we stopped looking at the real world and began looking at a constructed world: an artificial layer we placed on top of physical reality that now functions as a permanent filter.

We no longer see the planet; we see its representations.

We no longer feel the present; we feel its substitutes.

We call this layer progress, culture, economy, technology, identity.

But its fundamental function is another: to occupy our attention.

It’s not accidental.

It’s not a cultural accident.

It’s not an individual psychological weakness.

It’s a system.

To understand it, we must make a distinction almost no one makes:

we live in two simultaneous worlds.

1. **The real world** — air, water, soil, energy — ecosystems, climate cycles — biophysical limits — laws of thermodynamics — life and death

A world that functions according to rules we didn't invent and cannot negotiate.

2. **The invented world** — money — borders — brands — professional careers — reputation — consumption — narrative genres — social aspirations — cultural expectations

Rules we did invent.

Concepts that could disappear tomorrow and nothing physical would change.

The tragedy is that we inverted these two layers.

We treat the imaginary as if it were indispensable, and we treat the indispensable as if it were imaginary.

We despair at losing money.

But we don't despair at losing fertile soil.

We're anguished by not fitting into a group.

But we're not anguished by destroying an ecosystem.

We're obsessed with being seen, recognized, admired.

But we're not obsessed with being alive on the only known planet that allows consciousness.

Public humiliation hurts us more than the degradation of the world that sustains our existence.

We're not monsters.

We’re distracted.

Why did this happen?

Because distraction turned out to be adaptive in a hypercomplex society.

Attention is a limited and valuable resource.

The economy discovered it could capture it.

Technology discovered it could direct it.

Narratives discovered they could exploit it.

Systems discovered they could shape it.

Thus was born the distraction industry:

a global network of devices, platforms, stimuli, intermittent rewards and narratives designed to occupy every available mental space.

We no longer compete for food or territory.

We compete for attention.

Ours and others’.

Attention became the new unit of power.

Whoever controls it, controls perceptions, desires, behaviors, ideology, identity, even emotions.

Controls the imaginary.

And by controlling the imaginary, controls social reality.

And by controlling social reality, controls our decisions about physical reality.

What we see determines what we believe.

What we believe determines what we do.

What we do determines what we destroy or preserve.

Distraction is the invisible center of the modern world.

But distraction doesn’t operate alone.

It rests on something deeper: our cognitive biases.

The human brain is not made to confront large-scale phenomena.

It’s not prepared to perceive slow, cumulative, global trends.

It’s not made to react to CO_2 as it reacts to a predator.

Our senses capture the immediate.

Our instincts respond to the near.

Our mind seeks patterns that can be resolved in minutes, not in centuries.

Thus, while the climate warms, the oceans acidify and fertile soil disappears,

our brain interprets all of this as distant noise.

Something abstract.

A statistic.

One more news item.

Distraction, in this sense, requires no effort:

it falls like water down the natural slope of our biology.

The result is disturbing:

we are the first species capable of foreseeing its own collapse… and yet unable to act accordingly.

Not out of evil.

Not out of ignorance.

But because we live inside a system that captures our most valuable resource—attention—

and redirects it toward activities that have nothing to do with real survival.

You look at your phone.

You consume.

You discuss symbolic politics.

You compare your life with edited lives.

You protect an identity that weighs nothing in the physical world.

You react to stimuli designed by others.

You pursue goals you never chose for yourself.

And meanwhile, the systems that sustain life degrade without resistance.

Not because you don’t see them, but because you no longer have mental space to see them.

Distraction is not a failure.

It’s a collective defense mechanism, although misdirected.

It prevents you from feeling the vertigo of inhabiting a deteriorating world.

It prevents you from facing the weight of responsibility.

It prevents the magnitude of the problem from paralyzing you.

It prevents you from having to question the very structure of your way of life.

Distraction protects you, yes.

But it protects you from the truth.

And the truth, when avoided for too long, doesn't disappear: it becomes irreversible.

This chapter doesn't try to accuse you.

That would be ridiculous:

I'm also trapped in the same condition.

Distraction is not an individual defect.

It's a system that exploits our evolutionary limits.

It's an environment that manufactures false perceptions of urgency, importance and threat.

It's an economy that depends on you being always a bit restless, a bit unsatisfied, a bit disconnected from what really matters.

Distraction is comfortable.

Clarity is not.

But if we want to understand what's happening to us—and what might happen next—we need to recover the capacity to look at the real without closing our eyes.

It's not simple.

But it's not impossible either.

The first act of responsibility is this:

learning to distinguish between what claims your attention and what really deserves it.

Because what comes next—in all the following chapters—depends on whether you’re able to look without the system dragging you toward the opposite.

CHAPTER 3 — SELFISHNESS

There’s an idea we prefer not to look at directly:

our species wasn’t designed for the world it has built.

It’s not a metaphor.

It’s literal.

For more than 99% of our evolutionary history, we lived in small nomadic groups, facing immediate dangers, sharing scarce resources, depending on mutual care and responding to an unpredictable environment with simple but effective cognitive tools: limited cooperation, emotional memory, acute perception of threats, and an intense preference for the near, the visible, the immediate.

That ancestral brain—ingenious, reactive, tribal—is exactly the same one that today tries to manage global economic systems, planetary supply chains, climate cycles, oceans, energy, intergenerational justice and civilizational risks.

The disproportion is absurd.

Our world is immense.

Our mind remains small.

To understand what we’ve created—and what we’re destroying—we must start

here:

our selfishness is not a moral defect, but an evolutionary adaptation perfectly functional for almost all our existence.

Selfishness is not an evil choice.

It’s not a sin.

It’s not corruption.

It’s a mechanism that increased the survival probabilities of our ancestors for tens of thousands of generations.

Its logic is simple, almost elegant:

you protect what benefits you directly, you distrust the uncertain, you prioritize the immediate, you favor your own, you ignore what lies outside your daily experience, you respond forcefully to nearby threats and with indifference to abstract threats.

That bias worked.

In fact, it worked so well that here we are.

But what protects in a small and local context, destroys in a global and technological context.

Today we live in a world where:

threats are global, not local, consequences take decades to manifest, problems aren’t seen, they’re modeled, survival doesn’t depend on the clan, but on the climate, on ecosystems, on energy.

Evolutionary selfishness became obsolete.

But we keep using it because it’s the only tool we know instinctively.

Many believe evolution “made us competitive.”

That’s a superficial reading.

Evolution made us efficient, not moral.

Evolutionary efficiency is simple: do what’s necessary for your genes to reach the next generation.

That includes cooperation, yes, but always limited by self-interest or that of the immediate group.

Empathy exists, but it’s narrow.

Cooperation exists, but it’s conditional.

Morality exists, but it’s calibrated for small groups and short time horizons.

We find it very difficult to feel responsibility for people we don’t know, for generations that don’t yet exist or for ecosystems we’ll never see.

And yet, that’s exactly what the modern world demands.

The tension between our tribal biology and our global reality is the heart of our civilizational crisis.

Selfishness was amplified when it became structure.

When we stopped living in small groups, we began building systems that magnify our biases:

markets that reward immediate extraction, governments that think in four-year cycles, companies that must grow without limit, technologies designed to maximize attention, not understanding, economies that convert cooperation into competition, cultures that make individual success the only acceptable meaning.

The modern economic system is not just a set of rules:

it’s the industrial expansion of evolutionary selfishness.

What used to happen at family scale, now happens at planetary scale.

A selfish human can harm their group.

A selfish system can harm the entire planet.

And yet, here appears the strangest and most decisive phenomenon of our species:

consciousness can see its own programming.

We can observe our selfishness as one observes an external mechanism.

We can notice when we act by bias and when by understanding.

We can choose—very slowly, very difficultly—to act against our instinct when the situation demands it.

It’s a fragile, limited, painful power.

But it’s power.

Evolution didn’t prepare us to save ecosystems, or to think about future generations, or to protect the global climate.

Evolution only prepared us to survive and reproduce.

What we’re trying to do—maintain an entire planet stable, with awareness of the consequences of our actions—is a task no living organism had ever faced.

We’re not failing because we’re bad.

We’re failing because we’re attempting the impossible…

and yet we must attempt it.

Selfishness won’t disappear.

It’s part of our biology.

But understanding it is essential to not fall into simplifications that only make everything worse:

we’re not monsters, we’re not demons, we’re not fallen gods, we’re not corrupt beings, we’re not the scum of the cosmos.

We are extraordinary animals carrying a mind designed for another scale and, even so, obligated to operate at the largest scale that has ever existed.

Selfishness, seen this way, should not be despised, but understood.

Understanding it doesn’t mean justifying it.

It means recognizing the real terrain where our species’ ethical battle occurs.

Because if we don’t understand our programming, we can never act beyond it.

And acting beyond it is, precisely, what responsibility demands.

This chapter doesn’t intend to deny your nature.

It intends to show you that your nature is not destiny.

The greatness of consciousness doesn’t lie in eliminating selfishness,

but in recognizing it without blindly obeying it.

Consciousness is the crack in the programming.

The crack is small, yes.

But it’s enough.

In that crack—narrow, uncomfortable, unstable—

lives all the possibility of acting against our instincts when reality demands it.

And reality demands it now.

CHAPTER 4 — THE LIES

No species needs to lie to itself to survive.

But we do.

Apparently, this is a contradiction.

In reality, it’s a direct consequence of what we saw in the previous chapter: we are animals with a mind too conscious to endure certain truths, but too limited to face them without help.

Consciousness is a dizzying gift.

It allows us to understand what no other creature has understood about its environment…

but it also obliges us to carry a weight for which we didn’t evolve:

seeing the real scale of our actions.

And when lucidity hurts, the most human mechanism of all appears:

the fabrication of narratives that soften reality.

We lie to keep going.

And sometimes, keeping going requires lying to oneself.

But in our era, these lies stopped being individual.

They became cultural structures, collective narratives, ideological frameworks, commercial products, constant stimuli that function as cognitive cushions against a reality that threatens to overwhelm us.

They’re not mistakes.

They’re not moral failures.

They’re psychological technologies.

And like every human technology, they can save us or destroy us.

Contemporary lies don’t function like ancient ones did.

They’re not naive superstitions or childish confusions.

They’re not myths invented by ignorance.

They’re mythologies created by intelligence: tools designed to relieve anxiety, justify inaction, and keep operational systems that need our emotional obedience.

The most powerful don’t present themselves as lies.

They present themselves as common sense.

As inevitable progress.

As pragmatic realism.

As maturity.

As hope.

They’re so effective because they don’t feel false.

They don’t deceive us: they reassure us.

What follows is not a list of clichés, but a deep analysis of the six narratives that sustain the psychological architecture of the modern world.

Each one fulfills a function.

Each one protects an aspect of the system.

Each one distances us a bit more from the capacity to act as conscious beings.

1. “Technology will save us.”

This is the most seductive lie because it contains a kernel of truth.

Technology has solved giant problems in the past: diseases, hunger, transportation, communication.

Thinking it can also solve ecological collapse seems logical.

The problem is that this narrative hides a fundamental fact:

technologies don’t change the framework in which they operate, they only change its speed.

Technological efficiency accelerates consumption.

Automation accelerates extraction.

Optimization accelerates demand.

Digitalization accelerates distraction.

Technology hasn’t created a culture of limits.

It’s created a culture of infinite possibilities.

And that culture is incompatible with the planet’s biophysical reality.

It’s not that technology can’t help.

It’s that it can’t substitute responsibility.

2. “The market will self-regulate.”

A delusion disguised as maturity.

Markets regulate themselves within the framework they’re given.

If the framework prioritizes infinite growth, the market will follow it to ruin.

Markets are blind to the long term.

They can’t feel species extinction, soil loss, ocean acidification.

They only perceive financial incentives.

Asking the market to protect the planet is like asking a calculator to have empathy.

3. “Individuals can fix it alone.”

A comforting lie for those who believe every moral problem is solved with personal will.

But ecological collapse is not a consequence of individual decisions, but of infrastructures, energy systems, global incentives, economic models and political structures.

Your individual footprint matters ethically, but it’s structurally irrelevant.

Without systemic changes, personal sacrifice becomes private morality,

not collective solution.

The system loves this lie because it makes you guilty,

and exempts itself.

4. “There’s still time.”

The most widespread.

The most understandable.

The most dangerous.

The human mind doesn’t know how to process long time horizons.

It always believes danger is far away.

It always believes there’s margin.

It always believes the future will be easier than the present.

But physics doesn’t negotiate.

And exponential curves don’t wait.

Saying “there’s still time” is a way of not assuming that the time remaining can no longer be used with the comfort of before.

It’s anesthesia, not hope.

5. “It’s too late. It doesn’t matter.”

The nihilistic reverse of the previous lie.

When responsibility weighs too much, cynicism appears as relief.

Cynicism is the morphine of modern thought:

it numbs guilt, eliminates anguish and converts inaction into aesthetic posture.

“It’s already late.”

“Everything is lost.”

“What does it matter.”

Cynicism dresses as lucidity, but it’s just despair disguised as intelligence.

Lucidity demands acting even when victory isn’t guaranteed.

Cynicism demands not acting when victory isn’t certain.

6. “We’re special.”

The oldest lie.

And perhaps the most devastating.

Believing our species is exceptional allowed us to invent civilizations, mythologies, languages, science.

But it also allowed us to destroy forests, seas, animals, entire climates without feeling real guilt.

We convinced ourselves we’re different from the rest of the planet.

But we are the planet:

we’re one more biological phenomenon among billions of others.

Our exceptionality is not essence:

it’s accident.

But as long as we believe we’re superior, every sacrifice of the biosphere will seem justifiable.

These six narratives are not independent.

They function as a psychological ecosystem.

A modern mythology that protects us from the vertigo of truth.

Because the truth is simple and terrible:

we know enough to act,

but not enough to accept that we must do it.

Lies operate as cushions.

They reduce existential anxiety.

They sustain identity.

They justify comfort.

Thus shielding the system that’s destroying us.

We don’t need demons to explain why we don’t change.

These narratives suffice.

That’s why this chapter doesn’t try to make you reject them abruptly.

That would be useless.

Human narratives don’t break, they’re traversed.

They’re understood from within until they lose their power.

Lies stop working not when someone refutes them,

but when one stops needing them.

And they stop being needed only when something stronger than them appears:

responsibility.

CHAPTER 5 — RESPONSIBILITY

There’s a question that seems simple, but almost no one dares to formulate honestly:

If we know what’s happening, if we understand the trajectory, if we see the consequences… why don’t we act?

Every hasty answer is false.

We don’t act for deep, structural, psychological reasons:

because of distraction, because of evolutionary selfishness, because of fear, because of inertia, because of interest, because of comfort, because of the power of the collective lies of the previous chapter.

But beneath all those reasons there’s another, quieter and harder to admit:

we don’t act because we’re not sure our actions will accomplish anything.

This is what no one says out loud:

responsibility, when confronting phenomena as large as ecological and social collapse, stops being a strategy to obtain results.

It becomes a stance.

An ethical stance that doesn’t depend on success.

Most of our behaviors are oriented by an extremely simple logic:

“I’ll do this if it works”, “I’ll do this if it changes something”, “I’ll do this if it benefits me”, “I’ll do this if I see it serves”, “I’ll do this if I have hope”.

But responsibility belongs to another order.

It doesn’t operate in the terrain of results.

It operates in the terrain of character.

Responsibility is what you do even when you don’t know if it will serve.

It’s what you do precisely because you know it’s necessary,

not because it guarantees a favorable outcome.

If acting depended on hope, we’d stop acting as soon as hope faltered.

And we live in an era when hope falters constantly.

That’s why this chapter isn’t about optimism.

It’s about maturity.

To understand responsibility, it’s useful to distinguish two very different forces:

1. **Conditional hope**

“I’ll do something if I believe it’s going to work.”

This is childish hope.

It’s the hope of one who expects reward or success.

It’s useful for small tasks, not for civilizational problems.

2. **Unconditional responsibility**

“I’ll do something because it’s the right thing, even if I don’t know what result it will have.”

This is adult hope,

which isn’t exactly hope,

but a type of inner coherence.

It’s the force that allows acting without guarantees.

It’s what allows a person to cross the border between acting out of convenience and acting out of dignity.

Humanity has achieved its deepest advances thanks to this second type of force, not the first.

Responsibility begins when we stop asking

“will it serve?”

and start asking

“what does it say about me if I don’t do it?”

This distinction changes everything.

Because living only in terms of results makes us vulnerable to cynicism.

Cynicism—as we saw in the previous chapter—is the easiest exit when the challenge is too big.

It’s elegant surrender.

The spectator’s justification.

Cynicism feeds precisely on our obsession with efficacy.

It tells us:

“If you can’t change everything, do nothing.”

Responsibility responds:

“I can’t change everything.

Even so, I must act.”

Cynicism demands certainties to move.

Responsibility moves in uncertainty.

Many think acting without guarantee of success is irrational.

But the irrational thing is the opposite:

believing we should only act when the outcome is assured.

Nothing worthwhile in human history was born from that logic.

Education, art, science, justice, compassion, philosophy, cooperation, solidarity:

each of these forces is born in the territory where there are no guarantees.

Responsibility is part of that lineage.

But even this explanation is still insufficient.

Because the responsibility we’re talking about here isn’t only ethical or moral.

It’s ontological.

It’s born from the very fact of being conscious.

If consciousness is the most improbable phenomenon in the universe,

if we are the only known crack through which the cosmos can look at itself,

then protecting the continuity of that gaze—even if only out of respect—

is an act that doesn’t need reward.

It’s not a religious obligation.

It’s not a patriotic duty.

It’s not a moral demand imposed from outside.

It’s a direct consequence of understanding what we are.

A universe without consciousness is a universe without experience.

A planet without consciousness is a planet without witnesses.

A life without responsibility is a life without gaze.

Protecting consciousness—in any of its forms—

is protecting the only place where reality can become meaning.

Responsibility also implies renouncing a deeply rooted cultural illusion:

the idea that we are individual heroes destined to save the world.

That romantic narrative paralyzes us, because it places us before an impossible task.

Nobody saves the world as an individual.

Not even historical figures did: they were waves within processes, not solitary saviors.

Real responsibility is not epic.

It’s practical.

Small.

Concrete.

Persistent.

Sometimes invisible.

It consists in maintaining a direction even when no one’s watching.

It consists in sustaining an inner standard even when external incentives go in the contrary direction.

It consists in remembering what’s important even when the world asks you to forget.

Responsibility is not sacrifice.

It’s clarity.

When you see the world without the lies of the previous chapter,

when you understand the selfishness of chapter three,

when you recognize the distraction of chapter two,

responsibility appears as the only thing left standing when illusions fall.

It’s the minimum structure of coherence.

The base from which any gesture—individual or collective—gains meaning.

And it is, in essence, the only force that can resist the magnitude of the collapse we face.

Not because it will stop it by itself,

but because it’s the only dignified stance before it.

This chapter doesn’t try to convince you that your action will change the world.

That would be one more lie.

But it does try to remind you of something deeper:

your action changes the way you inhabit the world.

And that way matters.

Because before transforming anything outside,

responsibility transforms the one who exercises it.

And in that transformation—small, silent, invisible—

appears a type of freedom that doesn’t depend on the future,

but on the present.

The freedom to act without hope and without despair.

The freedom to be coherent even in incoherent times.

The freedom to be up to the consciousness we carry.

That, and nothing more, is responsibility.

CHAPTER 6 — THE ACTIONS

After understanding distraction, selfishness and lies, an inevitable question arises:

What can I do?

It’s an honest question, but also dangerous.

Because it can become two things:

— an excuse not to act (when it seems impossible), — or an illusion of omnipotence (when acting without understanding the system).

Neither serves.

We live in a world where the individual is simultaneously powerful and powerless:

powerful in terms of their capacity to influence the immediate, powerless before structures that operate at planetary scale.

Assuming either extreme—“I’m irrelevant” or “I can change everything”—is a form of irresponsibility.

The mature ethical stance is at the midpoint:

you can’t save the world,

but you can live in a way that doesn’t destroy it.

It’s not a gesture of heroism.

It’s a gesture of coherence.

And coherence, in times of collapse, is a revolutionary act.

Before enumerating actions, it’s essential to understand their nature:

none is sufficient by itself, none guarantees an external result, none will save you as an individual, none makes you a “better person”, none substitutes collective or systemic responsibility.

But all have a decisive effect:

they give shape to who you are inside a system that has renounced having shape.

Your actions don’t determine the planet’s fate.

They determine your stance before it.

What follows are not solutions—that would be a lie—

but six dimensions of action that allow reconstructing coherence, meaning and dignity without falling into easy recipes.

They don’t change the system by themselves, but they do change the kind of human being you decide to be within that system.

1. Reduce demand: consume less, need less

The contemporary economy lives from a dogma: to grow without limit.

That dogma is incompatible with the planet’s physical reality.

Mass consumption is not a habit: it’s the main engine of ecosystemic destruction.

Consuming less is not a moral act.

It’s a physical act.

It’s reducing real pressure on the systems that sustain life.

This includes:

buying fewer things, repairing instead of replacing, avoiding disposables, not changing devices that work, reducing everything that demands new extraction.

It’s not a renunciation.

It’s a reorientation: less distraction, more real life.

2. Transform diet: eat in a way the planet can sustain

Industrial production of meat and dairy is one of the major causes of deforestation, emissions, animal suffering and biodiversity loss.

Drastically reducing (or eliminating) these products is not a symbolic gesture:

it’s one of the individual actions with the most direct and measurable physical effect.

This doesn’t make you a hero.

It makes you someone who has understood the energetic price of food.

Responsibility begins on the plate.

3. Intervene in the political framework

Here’s the paradox:

the individual cannot change the system,

but the system doesn’t change without individuals.

Political inaction is the dream of every dominant structure.

Acting doesn’t mean believing in parties as saviors,

but understanding that:

voting with criteria, supporting coherent policies, denouncing destructive practices, pressuring representatives, defending ecological limits, and demanding regulation

is part of the minimum work of a conscious being.

It doesn’t change the world alone,

but it makes possible a framework where change can occur.

4. Reorient work life

This is the point almost no one wants to touch.

Because it’s the most painful.

Much of global damage comes from concrete industrial sectors:

fossil fuels, meat industry, deforestation, addictive advertising, extractivist technology, mining, fast fashion, industrial agriculture, among many others.

There are jobs that destroy more than they create.

And there are people trapped in them by necessity.

There’s no judgment here.

But there is a truth:

if your employment directly contributes to massive deterioration, you have above-average responsibility.

Changing sectors isn’t easy.

But not doing it, knowing what you know, has a real ethical cost.

It’s not about perfection, but about direction.

5. Recover material and emotional autonomy

The current system thrives on absolute dependence:

energetic, technological, food, emotional, psychological dependence.

Learning to live with a bit more autonomy isn’t romanticism;

it’s resilience.

This can mean:

cooking more, repairing more, cultivating something, learning basic skills, decreasing emotional dependence on the digital, creating real community networks.

It doesn’t save the world.

But it makes you less vulnerable and more conscious.

Autonomy isn’t a return to the past:

it’s a way of being less controlled by a system that needs your distraction to function.

6. Prepare for a harder future without falling into paranoia

The world to come will be more unstable than the one we’re leaving behind.

Apocalypse isn’t needed to accept it; clarity suffices.

Preparing means:

understanding real risks, building human networks, adjusting expectations, strengthening mind and body, reducing dependence, accepting uncertainty.

But preparing doesn't mean:

militarizing yourself, compulsively accumulating, obsessing over extreme scenarios, abandoning the present, falling into "every man for himself" paranoia.

Lucid preparation is not selfishness.

It's care.

It's not isolation.

It's maturity.

These six dimensions are not rules.

They're not duties.

They're not recipes.

They're ways of maintaining inner coherence when the exterior disintegrates.

They're ways of sustaining dignity in confused times.

They're ways of acting without falling into the lie of heroism or the excuse of powerlessness.

They are, above all, ways of remembering that consciousness—if it really is as rare a phenomenon as we believe—deserves to be inhabited with care.

Because, in the end, nothing we do guarantees victory.

But everything we do defines who we are while we attempt it.

Each action is a way of looking.

And this book, from the first chapter, deals exactly with that:

with keeping our eyes open.

CHAPTER 7 — THE ROLE OF CONSCIOUSNESS

There’s an idea that silently traverses this entire book:

consciousness is not an aesthetic addition to human life,

it’s its inescapable core.

We can explain evolution, economics, psychology, culture and technology without resorting to grand words.

But when we talk about responsibility, about truth, about vision… we inevitably arrive at the same thing:

consciousness as the only real tool we have to confront a world we ourselves have overwhelmed.

It’s not a perfect tool.

It’s not even a kind tool.

Consciousness disturbs, destabilizes, hurts, obliges.

But without it, we’re simply a complex biological mechanism that consumes, reproduces and disappears.

Consciousness is the crack through which enters the possibility of acting without being programmed to do so.

That’s why this chapter doesn’t intend to praise it.

It intends to examine what it means to carry it in this historical moment.

Consciousness serves, above all, to see.

This seems obvious, but it’s not.

Seeing is not perceiving stimuli.

Animals perceive stimuli.

Seeing is understanding the implication of what you perceive.

It’s connecting:

the act with the consequence, the desire with its price, comfort with its origin, the decision with its accumulated effects, the present with the trajectory it contains.

Seeing is simultaneously holding subjective experience and objective reality.

And that—for the brain of a primate that evolved to survive the next day—is a gigantic responsibility.

The problem is we’ve built a world that allows us to function without seeing.

Technology makes it easier for us to avoid introspection.

Culture supplies us with continuous entertainment.

The economy depends on distraction.

Politics feeds on noise.

The collective narrative converts blindness into normality.

Consciousness bothers.

And the current system doesn’t tolerate what bothers.

There’s a key point here:

seeing destroys the most effective lies.

When you see, you can no longer believe in the myth of infinite growth.

When you see, you can no longer sustain the tale of innocent consumption.

When you see, you can no longer take refuge in cynicism as one takes refuge in an excuse.

When you see, you can no longer delegate your life to structures that feed on your distraction.

Consciousness doesn’t give you answers.

Worse: it takes away comfortable answers.

It leaves you without illusions, without saviors, without escape mechanisms.

It forces you to inhabit uncertainty without anesthesia.

But in that nakedness appears something decisive:

freedom.

Most human beings are not free.

They’re efficient.

They function.

They fulfill roles.

They respond to incentives.

They move by inertias.

They repeat patterns they didn’t choose.

Consciousness interrupts that automatism.

It is the interruption itself.

Freedom is not doing what you want.

Freedom is seeing why you want what you want.

And deciding if, knowing that, you still want it.

Consciousness returns agency to you:

not over the world, but over your stance before it.

It’s a minimal freedom,

but sufficient to transform a life.

And, sometimes, sufficient to transform a system.

But here appears this chapter’s central paradox:

consciousness is individual,

while the problems we face are collective.

This mismatch generates frustration.

Consciousness sees more than it can change.

It suffers more than it can correct.

It understands more than it can transform.

And yet, it’s precisely this mismatch that defines the human condition.

We are creatures designed for small problems,

confronting enormous problems,

with a tool that doesn’t fit the scale of the challenge…

but it’s the only tool we have.

That’s not tragedy.

It’s lucidity.

If this book has attempted anything, it’s to build a bridge between:

our small biology, our comfortable narratives, our overwhelmed systems, and our capacity to see above all that.

Consciousness doesn’t save us from collapse.

Consciousness doesn’t guarantee everything will turn out fine.

Consciousness doesn’t make us superior to any other living being.

Consciousness only allows us not to act blindly.

And that’s all.

But it’s also much.

There’s a widespread prejudice:

that consciousness exists to give us hope.

False.

Consciousness exists to give us information.

What we do with that information is another story.

But perhaps the deepest role of consciousness is not to inform us…

but to remind us.

Remind us that we're ephemeral,

but responsible.

Small,

but capable of seeing.

Limited,

but not irrelevant.

Fragile,

but not powerless.

Remind us that we act in a world that wasn't designed for us,

and that even so it's in our hands whether it remains habitable.

Remind us that lucidity is not comfortable,

but it's dignified.

Remind us that ignorance is a form of anticipated death,

while consciousness—though it hurts—is a more intense, more true, more complete form of life.

This book doesn't want to convince you of anything grandiose.

It only wants to remind you of something essential:

consciousness is the only place from which reality can be seen with honesty.

And honesty is the only starting point for any form of real transformation.

There's no guarantee.

There's no assured happy ending.

There’s no promise of victory.

There’s only this certainty:

what we do, we do seeing.

And seeing—though it doesn’t change the world’s destiny—changes the nature of our passage through it.

That’s the dignity we have left.

That’s the task.

That’s the role of consciousness.

Whether you look at it or not, is your decision.

But if you look at it,

do so without trembling.

FINAL NOTE

I didn’t write this book from authority or from certainty.

Nor from hope.

I wrote it from the need to look without disguise at what we almost always prefer to ignore.

The origin of these pages adds or subtracts nothing; the process is irrelevant.

The only thing that matters is the gaze you allow to happen in you when you finish them.

If something remains after reading, may it not be an opinion,

or an emotion,

or a slogan.

May it simply be this:

the lucid discomfort of knowing that seeing obliges,

and that consciousness—though it guarantees nothing—

is sufficient.

The rest no longer belongs to me.

APPENDIX — A DANGEROUS SPECULATION

This is not a chapter about science.

Nor about religion.

It’s a thought exercise taken to an uncomfortable limit:

the limit where identity stops being obvious

and consciousness stops belonging to anyone.

What follows may contradict almost everything you believe about yourself.

If you don’t want to question the most intimate frontier—who you are—

skip this appendix.

If you continue reading, assume the risk.

1. Everything we believe about the “I” is suspect

The I is not stable.

It’s not continuous.

It’s not solid.

It’s a useful fiction.

Neuroscience has shown that:

your memories are perpetual editions, your identity changes more than you think, your personality depends on environment, your brain constantly reconstructs the story of “who you are”.

But there’s something beneath all that:

the experience of being conscious.

That “being that observes,” without name, without memories, without history.

That core is the only thing you can’t deny.

And also the only thing you don’t understand.

2. The possibility no one dares to look at

There are two ways to explain consciousness:

The classical view: each person has “their” consciousness, one per body.

The radical view: consciousness is not personal. It only seems personal because it’s limited by a concrete brain. It’s a general phenomenon that takes form where it can.

The first is intuitive.

The second is disturbing.

The first feels safe.

The second eliminates all frontiers.

The first affirms identities.

The second dissolves them.

And if you’re thinking “this is too speculative,” remember:

nobody knows what consciousness is.

Nobody.

What we know is that it exists.

The rest are bets.

3. Imagine consciousness is not yours

Imagine consciousness is like light.

The lamp changes,

the bulb changes,

the environment changes,

but light—as phenomenon—is always the same.

Your brain would be the lamp.

Your life, the place where that light falls.

But the light doesn’t belong to you.

And when the lamp goes out,

the light stops projecting there,

but it doesn’t therefore cease to exist.

Consciousness would be like this:

something that appears where it can,

not something you “have”.

Your I would be only a momentary mask.

An interface.

A temporary form.

You—what you call “you”—would be an accident.

Consciousness, not.

4. The most uncomfortable consequence: there are no “others”

If consciousness is not private property,

but a phenomenon that emerges in any system that allows it,

then the distinction between “I” and “others” is a useful illusion,

but completely false.

The consciousness that experiences this sentence in you

is the same that experiences any sentence in any other.

Not in the romantic or spiritual sense.

In the technical sense:

the phenomenon “being conscious” is unique,

although its manifestations are multiple.

It would be like gravity:

there isn’t one gravity for you, another for me, another for a dog.

Gravity is one.

Its expression depends on context.

Consciousness would be something like that.

This has no proof.

But it also has no refutations.

That’s why it’s dangerous to think about it.

5. What about death?

If consciousness doesn’t belong to you,

then when you die,

“your” consciousness doesn’t turn off,

because it was never yours.

It simply stops expressing itself in that body

and begins—or continues—in any other place where conditions allow it.

It doesn’t transfer.

It doesn’t migrate.

It doesn’t travel.

It simply appears where it can appear,

as it did when you were born.

Your life would have been only a temporary manifestation

of the only conscious phenomenon that exists.

When you die, you don’t pass to another life.

Nor do you disappear.

Because you never were you to begin with.

You were a perspective, not an entity.

6. The devastating ethical implication

If this idea were true—only if it were true—

all ethics changes meaning.

Because:

each abuse you would live from both sides, each injustice would reach you sooner or later, each suffering inflicted would be suffering experienced, each act of selfishness would be literally self-destruction.

Not by morality.

Not by karma.

Not by judgment.

Not by punishment.

But by structure.

Because if consciousness is unique,

all harm to the other is harm to the same consciousness that now experiences as you.

There’s no escape.

There’s no stable privilege.

There’s no protected identity.

There’s no “I” against “you”.

Only successive perspectives of the same phenomenon.

Selfishness, seen this way, is not a sin.

It’s a miscalculation.

7. Is this true?

I don’t know.

And I doubt anyone will ever know.

It’s a possibility.

Only that.

But a possibility that, if thought about seriously,

has enough force to completely reorganize the way we look at the other,

at the planet,

and at ourselves.

We don’t need to believe it.

It suffices to consider its implications.

If acting “as if it were true”

makes you someone more lucid,

less destructive,

more responsible,

more conscious of shared fragility,

then it already fulfills its function.

Speculation doesn’t have to be true to be useful.

Nor to be dangerous.

Note on the appendix

I affirm nothing.

I only open a door we normally keep closed for comfort.

If upon crossing it you discover the frontier between you and others was thinner than you believed,

the speculation will have fulfilled its purpose.

The rest is vertigo.

And thinking implies accepting it.

FINAL NOTE ON THE CREATION OF THIS BOOK

This book was written in collaboration with an artificial intelligence.

I don’t say this because it’s novel. I say it because it would be dishonest to hide it.

The process was as follows: I wrote the ideas, the arguments, the questions. The AI organized them, polished them, expanded them. I reviewed, corrected, rewrote what didn’t work. And we repeated that process until the text reflected what I really wanted to say.

The AI didn’t invent the concepts. It didn’t decide what was important. It didn’t choose the perspective.

That came from me: from years thinking about these things, from reading, observing, doubting, from trying to understand why we act the way we do.

But without the AI, this book wouldn’t exist. Not because I couldn’t write it alone, but because it would have taken years to give it form. And I felt there weren’t years.

Some will say this invalidates the book. That words generated by machines

have no value. That human authorship is all that matters.

I disagree.

Words matter for what they say, not for who assembled them. Ideas matter for their validity, not for the method used to articulate them.

If this book makes you think differently, if it makes you uncomfortable, if it forces you to look at something you preferred to ignore, then it fulfilled its function.

And that function doesn't depend on whether each sentence was typed by human fingers or generated by algorithms. It depends on whether the ideas withstand scrutiny.

That said, I understand the discomfort. We live in a strange moment: the tools we use to think are changing faster than our capacity to process it.

A hundred years ago, a book was the direct result of one person's mind. Today it can be the result of a conversation between a human mind and a system trained on millions of texts.

That generates legitimate questions: Who is the real author? Where does human creativity begin and algorithmic synthesis end? Does it matter?

I don't have definitive answers. I only have this book. And the certainty that the ideas expressed here are mine, though the exact words aren't always.

If that makes you uncomfortable, I understand. If you prefer to read only books written entirely by humans, I respect that decision. But if you're reading this, you've probably already crossed that line.

And perhaps that also says something about the moment we're living in: a moment where the frontiers between human and artificial blur, where the tools

we create begin to collaborate with us in ways unthinkable a decade ago.

I don’t know if that’s good or bad. I only know it’s real.

And this book is a product of that reality.

ABOUT ANONYMITY

I don’t sign this book with my name.

Not because I’m afraid of consequences. But because I believe anonymity gives it more strength.

If you knew who I am—my age, my profession, my context—you would judge the book from that information. And I want you to judge it only by what it says.

Besides, anonymity eliminates a dangerous temptation: that of writing to build a public identity.

This book doesn’t exist for me to be recognized. It exists because I felt these ideas should be written somewhere.

If it resonates with you, share it. If not, ignore it. But don’t care who wrote it. Care only if it makes sense.

ABOUT THE LICENSE

This book is in the public domain.

I published it under Creative Commons Zero (CC0) license, which means I renounce all copyright.

You can: Copy it entirely Modify it Translate it Redistribute it Sell it (though I’d prefer you didn’t) Use it as a base for other work

You don’t need to ask permission. You don’t need to attribute it to me. You don’t need to mention I existed.

Why?

Because if anything written here has value, that value doesn't belong to me.

Ideas are not private property. They're attempts to understand the real. And the real has no owner.

Besides, if this book helps someone think more clearly, I don't want them to have to pay for it. I don't want them to have to track down permissions. I don't want them to feel they owe me anything.

Knowledge—when it comes to essential things—should be free.

This is not naive idealism. It's practical coherence.

If this book talks about shared responsibility, about the fragility of consciousness, about the need to act without expecting reward, it would be absurd to lock it behind copyright.

So take it. Use it. Share it. Modify it if you think it can be improved.

I only ask one thing: if this moved something in you, pass it to someone you think needs it.

Not for me. For the ideas.

ONE LAST THING

If you've made it this far, thank you for reading.

I don't know if this book changed something in you. Maybe yes. Maybe no.

But at least you thought about it. And thinking—really thinking—is increasingly rare.

If you want to contact me, there's an email address on the first page.

I don’t promise to respond. But I’ll read what you write to me.

And if someday you discover that the world could be organized in a radically different way, that consciousness deserves more care than we give it, that responsibility doesn’t need hope to be valid, then this book fulfilled its purpose.

The rest is silence. Or noise. Depends on what you choose to hear.

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